

Bacteriological examinations were made in all cases. The diphtheria bacillus occurred in most cases, generally associated with the streptococcus pyogenes, the diplococcus lanceolatus, or the staphylococci.

Suppuration of the middle ear was very common in these cases, being present on both sides in twelve cases and on one side only in six. The bacteriological examination of the ear yielded results very similar to those obtained in the examination of the sinuses.

The writer believes an infection of the antrum of Highmore, with diphtheria bacillus, to be the explanation of the persistence of the bacillus in cultures from the nose after all membrane has disappeared. The antrum drains slowly, and if once infected with diphtheria bacilli, cultures from the nose would be positive until drainage had ceased or the bacilli had died out.

That these acute processes may lead to chronic sinus disease the writer considers very probable.

HYGIENE AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

UNDER THE CHARGE OF

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Poisoning by Meats.—DR. Y. BOYER (*Lyon Medical*, May 14, 1899) records a case of sextuple poisoning from eating veal. The persons affected were members of one household, and ranged widely in point of age, the youngest being children of three and six years. The symptoms appeared in the night, about six hours after the food was taken, and began with vomiting and violent colic. In the morning all had intense gastric irritability, coated tongue, pain on pressure, especially in the right iliac fossa, rumbling, slight tympanites, and scanty urine. The cook had markedly dilated pupils, sensation of suffocation, constriction and dryness of the throat, and intense suffusion of the face. The child of six years had dilated pupils and disturbance of vision, and finally pain and stiffness of the muscles of the neck. The younger of the two children and the mother were less affected than the others, and made a more rapid recovery. The chambermaid had at first a certain degree of aggravation of symptoms, with a tendency to syncope and great muscular weakness, which latter effects were also marked in the case of the cook, who continued for some time to be troubled by dilatation of the pupils and disturbed vision. At the end of nine days there was no further appearance of danger, and the two most severely affected were well on the way to recovery.

Unfortunately no bacteriological examination was made either of the meat or the discharges, but the nature of the symptoms leaves no room for doubt as to their cause.

Another case in which five persons were affected is reported by DR. MEREDITH YOUNG (*Public Health*, June, 1899). Here the offending meat was three-quarters of a pound of "pig's cheek," which was eaten at half-past four in the afternoon, between which time and the onset of symptoms nothing else was eaten. On the following morning Mr. A. was seized suddenly with vomiting, purging, and severe abdominal pain, and shortly afterward became very feverish and weak, and suffered from severe frontal headache. His wife had severe abdominal pain, and toward noon was strongly purged. She suffered nausea, retched, but could not vomit; had fever and severe headache, and was much more prostrated, and took more time to recover than her husband. She was unable to take food for three days. Their daughter was taken sick at the same time and with the same symptoms, though less severely. Her chief symptom was a strong and overpowering tendency to sleep. A fourth person, who ate but little as compared with the amounts ingested by the others, was slightly purged, but suffered nothing more. The remaining member showed no effects until during the second night. On the following morning she was feverish, had severe headache and abdominal pain, and retched unsuccessfully. Purging did not occur until the afternoon. As was the case with the daughter, the most prominent symptom after the onset was somnolence. Recovery followed in every case. Investigation showed that the cheeks had been cooked two days before, and had been placed together to cool and "set." It was estimated that between fifty and sixty persons had purchased of them, but all but a small proportion were unknown to the seller, and so no systematic inquiry could be made. Four only could be followed up, and two of these reported no trouble; a third was made severely sick and lost two days' work, and the fourth, after eating, drank so much beer that he was made sick and lost it all by vomiting, and yet was affected like the others, but not so actively. In this set of cases, too, it was impossible to procure any of the meat or vomited matter or dejections for bacteriological examination.

A much more extensive outbreak, involving nearly fifty people, one of whom died, is reported by DR. W. SILBERSCHMIDT (*Zeitschrift für Hygiene und Infektionskrankheiten*, xxx. 328). This was due to a kind of sausage known in Switzerland as "Landjäger" (gendarme). It is made of beef, often, also, horsemeat, with pig fat. The materials are chopped rather coarsely, spiced, put into casings, pressed flat for a day, smoked two days, dried in the air several more days, and then eaten in the raw state. The particular sausages in this instance were made of cow beef, from animals that had been certified as sound by the veterinarian, and pork that had been bought about two weeks previously and kept with preservative salt, and had appeared quite fresh and unchanged when used. In the morning of the first day when the sausages were on sale a man and his wife ate one of them together, and both were made so sick toward evening and during the night that a physician was called. In the afternoon of the same day nineteen fishermen ate of them, and on the following day it was reported that all of them had been made sick. In the evening another man ate one, and it pleased him so much that he took another home to his wife and children. On the next day he had abdominal pains, headache, vomiting, diarrhoea, thirst, and a chill. In the afternoon his wife and his two children that had eaten were similarly seized. A boatman who ate two whole sausages suffered

no inconvenience beyond a little pain on the following day. Another, who was sick eighteen days, and then returned to his work, was seized again ten days later with the same train of symptoms.

One young man, aged eighteen years, entered the hospital in the morning of the second day, and died during the night, two days and a half after ingestion of the sausage. At the time of entrance the abdomen was sensitive, and he was passing grayish watery stools; in the afternoon he was delirious, and his pulse was very small, irregular, and rapid. During the night he collapsed and died. Section after twelve hours showed a spleen of normal size, swollen mesenteric glands, and hyperæmia of the stomach and intestines. The follicles were much swollen, and in the ileum were several areas from 4 to 6 cm. in length by 1 cm. in breadth, where the mucous membrane was discolored and eroded. Other organs were normal. Six others of those affected were discharged from the hospital after from seven to fifteen days' treatment.

In an adjoining town, where sausages of the same lot were sold, there were sixteen other cases, all with the same symptoms. Taking all the cases together, the symptoms of prominence were as follows: Very severe, partially crampy, abdominal pains; very profuse diarrhœa, the stools numbering from eight to twelve per day, and in color varying between gray, greenish, and yellow; usually vomiting, the rejected matters being watery and brownish; sunken eyes, high fever, great lassitude, tenderness over abdomen, cramps in the calves, great thirst, and, occasionally, meteorism. In most of the cases the symptoms appeared on the day after eating. The duration of the illness ranged between one and thirty days, the greater number recovering in two weeks, and becoming fit for work in three.

As is commonly the case in these food outbreaks, the attention of the authorities was not drawn to the matter in either town until some days had elapsed. Chemical analysis of unused sausages were made at both places. One analyst reported negative results; the other reported the presence of ptomains, but did not further particularize. Bacteriological investigation revealed the presence of a variety of organisms, as was to have been anticipated, and among them, especially marked, *proteus vulgaris*, but no specific pathogenic bacteria were found.

Silberschmidt calls attention to the fact that the smoking to which the sausages had been subjected, while not destructive to the bacteria of putrefaction, was successful in masking any unpleasant smell or taste due to the process, and urges the warning of the public against eating smoked sausages in the uncooked state. In this case there was nothing to indicate that the animals from which the meat was derived were not in a perfectly healthy condition.

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